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AFFAIRS

AT

FORT CHARTRES.

1768-1781.

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AT

FORT CHARTRES,

1768-1781.

Henry Reed Stiles



ALBANY:

J. MUNSELL, 78 STATE STREET.

1864.

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AFFAIRS AT FORT CHARTRES, 1763-1781.

[From the Historical Magazine, Vol. VIII, No. 8.]

The kindness of one of our historical students enables us to give our readers the following curious letters, dated chiefly at Fort Chartres, and giving impressions of the western country as an English officer found it after the pacification effected by much toil, at the close of Pontiac's bold endeavor to recover by a combined effort of the aboriginal tribes what all French valor had failed to accomplish.

The period of the letters embraces the time when that great chief of the Ottawas fell at Cahokia, beneath the knife of an assassin, hired by an Englishman, but unfortunately the writer, not knowing how posterity would thank him for details of the event, makes no allusion to it, although he mentions some of its speedy results.

Fort Chartres is now a ruin on the bank of the Mississippi, with part of its walls swept away by the turbid tide, and a dense forest around, towering trees even growing in its very midst, so that a stranger unacquainted with its history might easily attribute it to some early race. It stands near Prairie du Rocher, Illinois, and was built in 1720, at a distance of a mile from the Mississippi. It was repaired in 1750, and at the time of these letters, owing to a new channel formed by the river, was not over eighty yards from the water. It was a well built stone fort, of irregular form, the sides being about 490 feet each.

After the surrender of the country it was left in command of St. Ange de Bellerive, an old and experienced officer who held command during the dangerous period of Pontiac's conspiracy, which had made it impossible for the English authorities to re-

place him. In vain did Major Loftus, with 400 regulars, attempt to reach it by way of New Orleans. Volleys from hidden foes on the shores drove him back with loss and panic to the new Spanish town; in vain Capt. Pitman made a subsequent attempt to penetrate in disguise, he lost heart and retired; in vain did Lt. Fraser seek to reach it overland. Narrowly escaping with life he reached New Orleans also in disguise, to add doubtless to the ill-concealed amusement of the French and Spanish officers, at these ineffectual attempts of the English to get to one of their own Forts.

When Croghan met Pontiac and peace was arranged, then and then only did Thomas Stirling, who died in 1808 a General and Baronet, now only a Captain, who had fought bravely under Abercrombie and Amherst, lead from Fort Pitt one hundred of the 42nd Highlanders, and to him on the 10th of October, 1765, did St. Ange surrender the Fort in a long document which the curious reader will find in the N. Y. Colonial Documents. At last the flag of England floated in Illinois. On the 2d of December Major Robert Farmer, of the 34th Foot, arrived with a strong body of troops and assumed command. It is not unlikely that he died in 1768, as his name then disappears from the army lists. At all events Lt. Col. John Wilkins, an officer of considerable experience, arrived there Sept. 5, 1768, and took command of the fort. The following letters give us a glimpse of his régime. He was probably its last commandant, as Father Mississippi in 1772, carried by storm two bastions and a curtain and the English struck their flag and abandoned Fort Char-

tres, soon to yield the whole Illinois country to a new republic.

MESSRS. EDITOR :

The correspondence, of which the following letters form a part, recently came into my temporary keeping, in the course of a genealogical investigation which I was pursuing, and seemed worthy of preservation in your valuable Magazine. It consisted of various letters, bills, etc., addressed to one Capt. Thomas Barnsley of Bensalem, Bucks Co. Penn., by various officers of the British Army, stationed at different posts in this country, and covered a period extending from '764 to '771. Capt. Barnsley became Ensign of the 60th Reg. Dec. 26, 1755, and as Lieut. in the Royal Americans was wounded at Ticonderoga July 8, 1758; became a Captain May 5, 1759, and, as appears from these documents, had been in '763 and '4 Paymaster to the First Battalion of H. M. Royal American Regiment—and this correspondence sufficiently evidences the respect and confidence reposed in his character and judgment, as a man of business as well as a soldier, by all who had any dealings with him. From Colonels to Ensigns—from official dignitaries to humble tailors—whether in America or in England—all seemed to make him their confidant—to seek his judgment—and to be content in his decision and advice. As for Ensign Butricke, the writer of these letters, we know little save what the letters themselves tell us. He seems to have fully shared in the public confidence in Mr. Barnsley; wrote very long, naïve and rather interesting letters, and, as far as we can learn, received not a single answer from the Captain, yet without apparently suffering any abatement of his previous respect and affection for that reticent personage.

I.

A Letter from George Butricke, dated Philadelphia, 19th Feb. '768, and addressed to Capt. Thos. Barnsley, residing at Bensalem—mostly on private and pecuniary matters.

"We have no kind of news at present but that of Miss Hannah Boyts' marriage to

Mr. Dean, merchant, which I am much pleased with for particular Reasons, you know."

"We in the Barrack are just as when you was in town, mostly in a Blaze with the fumes of that Dear friend Madiera, which seems to steal on them very powerfully, and very often makes the whole Barrk, as it were, a Hell indeed."

II.

To Capt. Thomas Barnsley.

PHILADELPHIA, the 22d May, '768.

DEAR SIR :

I have the pleasure to acquaint you that five Companies of our Regiment Rec^d orders yesterday morning to be ready to march at six hours warning, under the Command of Col. Wilkins* for Fort Pitt, and as I am to proceed with them it prevents me having the pleasure to see you at Present, and to prevent there being any mistake betwixt us I have sent my Servant, with the things I mentioned to you when you was here, Vizt : Seven hatts, 20 yards of furniture Chintz and Lace, Powder, flints, Ball, &c.

I shall leave my Large Chest behind, with every thing in it I Cannot Carry, and as I know no person I can so well depend on as our Butcher Kirker, I propose to Leave it with him, with orders to deliver it to you should any thing happen to me, and before I Leave Town I will send you a list of what it Contains.

III.

A letter from Butricke to the same Capt. Barnsley, dated June 23d, 1768, at Philadelphia, announces his recovery from his "late illness, so as to hope to be able to set off for Fort Pitt to-morrow morning."—

* Lt. Col. John Wilkins, Capt. 55th Foot Dec. 30, 1755, was Major in 1762. He commanded at Niagara. In 1763 he marched to relieve Detroit, but was attacked by the Indians, his troops cut to pieces, and he forced back to Fort Schlosser. He attempted next to reach it by water, but in a storm lost seventy men and was again compelled to return. In August, 1764, he was made Major of the 60th, and on the following June, Lt. Col. of the 18th Royal Irish. Compare Dr. O'Callaghan's note, Col. Doc. viii, 185.

Complains of the conduct of an Apothecary, one Bass, of that city &c. &c.

IV.

FORT CHARTRES, 15th Sept., 1768.

DEAR SIR:

I had the pleasure to write you the 21th June, the day before I left Philadelphia and the 30th I joined Colonel Wilkins at the Crossings of Juniata, he had been detained 14 days by Col. Armstrong, for Want of Carriages. But lucky for me he had got them a few days before I joined him. The 14th July we arrived at Fort Pitt, which is now a most shocking place; the Works and Barracks are all gone to Wreck. But the Country about it seems to be in a thriving way, a great number of settlers are already there, and many more Coming to it daily. 20th July we embarked on the Ohio with five companies of the 7 we had Brought up, the other 2 Left there to garrison Fort Pitt. It would be needless for me to give you a detail of our Voyage, as we mett with nothing metairil on it but the Loss of one man Provinded. From Fort Pitt to the Scioto River, which you will see by the List of the distances from Each place I send you inclosed, is 366 miles. We met with little or no game till we arriv'd there. But from thence to the falls, which is 316 miles more, the River is covered with all kinds of Game. We killed so many Buffaloes that We commonly served out one a day to Each Company, & they Commonly Weigh'd from 4 to 600 lbs. Wt.; they go in Hirds of 20, 30 & some times 50*, some people say in 100* they have seen them. We had such plenty that when a Bull was killed we only took the tongue and left the Rest for the Wolves. Besides this there is the greatest quantities of Turkeys, Deer, Geese, Ducks, Bears &c. I Believe the Like is not to be seen in any part of the known World. The River does not abound so much with fish as might be imagin'd, which I Believe is occasioned by there Being such quantities of Cattfish, which are so Large and Numerous that I think they destroy all other But the Turtle. We had such plenty of these two that I think we might have subsisted on them and

flour, without the assistance of any other food. We Caught some Catfish of 100 lb. Wt: But their Common size is from 30 to 70 lb. Wt: The Turtle is commonly of 30 lb. Wt: But seldom above that. They are Reckoned to be near as good as those taken at sea for soup. The 8th Aug. We arrived at the Falls, which you'll see is 682 miles from Fort Pitt, in 20 days. We Reckoned this good going, But I think with two or three Boats it might be done in half the time. The Falls appear verry tremendous at first sight, and startled our people much, as they had not been used to things of this kind before. I made Light of it, and after I had survey'd them well, offered to go down them immediately in my Boat, which made many of them swear that none but a mad man would attempt a thing of the kind. However, this pleased the Colonel so much that he swore there was nothing I ever see that I would not attempt; however, he would not suffer me to go down that night. Next morning sent the Engineer Hutchins to see if a passage could be found in the South shore, who return'd at 11 o'clock with the report that it could not be effected. Col. Wilkins Came to me again, tould me to be cautious of what I did, that he did not, by any means, desire me to hazard my Life in such a manner But if I really thought it could be done he would give me Leave. I jump't at the opportunity, threw some Baggage out of the Boat to make her Light in the head, and went off instantly. I Reconitred the head of the fall well before I made the attempt, and when I had found the passage went off, and in 2 minutes and 5 seconds pass'd the falls, that are near a Mile in Length, without the Least difficulty. all the people was looking out to see what would be our fate and when the Colonel see I had gott safe down he Come to meet me on my Return to the Campby Land & gave me his hearty thanks. He then ordered the whole to prepare to pass them, and that night we gott of 8 more, & next day completed the passage. These falls are near a mile in Length, and they appear much Like those you have seen on Hudson's River at Fort Miller Having halted here a day or two

to put every thing in proper order, on the 13th we embarked again, and the 23^d arrived at the Mississippi River where the Ohio has its confluence 482 miles from the falls the Whole Length of the Ohio River makes 1164 english miles. We was very much surprised to see the difference of the two Rivers at First sight the Ohio Being a fine Clear Jentle Current and the Mississippi a great Rapid full of sand Barrs, and so muddy that its impossible to drink it. Having made our desposition to assend the Mississippi, we embarked Early next morning But mett with so many difficulties that we only got four miles that night. We continued in the same manner for three days more, and did not gain above 6 or 7 miles a day, the current in many places is so very Rapid and the Navigation so much interrupted by great quantities of trees that falls with the Banks of the River and drives with the fluds in the springs, that we many times Rowd for 3 and four hours and did not gain one mile these difficulties with the inexperience of our men and officers made the Colonel almost mad at last he came to a determination to send off some person to Ft: Chartres to send down some empty battoes to Lighten some of ours that was so heavy loaded that they was not able to proceed. he again came to me to know if it would be agreeable to me to go on, I immediately embraced his offer and in half an hour Left the Detachment with four men and two Indians in a very small Boat, we Rowd night and day for three days and the 31st Aug^r arrived at Keskeskee* a Town & River on the English shore about 18 miles below Ft: Chartres; this I think was the most dangerous and fatiguing journey I ever made, I was inform'd when I arrived at Keskeskee that I had, had the greatest Luck in the world that I had escapt the enemy Indians that several parties was then out and had Cutt off a boat of the Companies, with 8 men, one of which got in, and a Connoe with 3 men, I sent of some boats that night to meet the Colonel and next morning set off in a *Callash* For Fort Chartres, as I said before is 18

* Kaskaskia.

miles from Keskeskee and we pass^d thro' the finest Country in the known world not a tree to be seen for several miles and the finest Land my Eyes ever beheld, Here they plant Indian Corn in the Spring and never touches it 'til fall when they go to fitch it home, and most of what I see is 10 & 12 foot high, they raze Tobacco as fine as in Virginia, they have the greatest quantity of black cattle—the plains for miles are Covered with them—indeed most of the french peoples Riches Lies in Stock of that kind for there is no kind of moneey Current there Butt what they make themselves, which is Little notes of so many Livers each, the horses are pritty good for Saddles, and might be made a great deal Better, But they are so careless of them that there is not one gelding in all the Colonie of the Illinois, all plowing & Hauling is done by Bullocks. The Country abutt F: Chartres is free for many miles Round it and the finest meddow ever was seen, grass grows here within a mile of the Fort to a great highht, and such quantities of it that there might be hay made for 100000 head of Cattle every summer, Fort Chartres is a midling sized Fort built of stone the walls about 2 foot thiek and 20 foot high, its Built in a Regular Square with a Bastion at each angle with Loop holes to fire small arms thro', there are some port holes for great Guns, But they seldom use them for they shoek the works too much, the barracks are very good built of stone, But they will not contain more than 200 men exclusive of officers.

We have been very Lucky both with men and officers in Respect to health, when we took possission of the Fort.

[The remainder of this letter is lost.]

V.

(ILLINOIS,) FORT CHARTRES, 30th October, 1768.

DEAR SIR

I had the pleasure to write you by Captain Forbes the 15th September when the 34th Regiment embarked from hence for Fort Pitt, I had the pleasure to aequaint you then we were all arrived here in good health, and as the season was so far advanced we were in

hopes we should not be troubled with the disorders frequent in these Climes for this year, But we was soon convinced otherwise, On Sunday the 18th Sept. I was sitting at Dinner when a sudden Coldness struck me all over without saying any thing of it I Rose from table and walk'd into the fields thinking to shake it off, But to no purpose, I then went to Bed and found myself siezed with a Hott fitt which did not last long and after slept pritty well till morning when I found myself quiet well, I told the Doctor of what had happened, who said it would turn to an Intermitting fever and indeed so I found it, that day Capt. Stewart Lt. Turner and 20 men was siezed in much the same manner and so it Continued that in 3 days time there was not one Commissioned Officer, non Commissioned or Private man But one Sergt. I Corp'l. and about nine men but what was siezed in the same manner next day as the Doctor had said mine came on again and in such a Violent manner that it laid me up for good. I had it six days with a Cold and hott fit every day But no shaking till the seventh when I had a very severe Cold fitt, and shuek very much the Doctor was pleased to see it and said he would soon put a stop to it, which he accordingly did, for from that time I had it no more, in this seven days I had five different servants all taken ill, and should have been in the greatest distress had it not been for a Woman of the Regt. whom a few days before had Claimed me for a Country man & was very tender and good to me till I was quiet recovered in a few days I was able to make my appearance on the parade being the first of the whole Garrison that was taken ill, on going out I found that all or most of them was in a much more dangerous way than I had been that there was hardly any but was dangerously ill of a nervous fever and I Could plainly see we should loose a great many men the first Visit I paid was to my Dear good friend, Capt Stewart who to my unspeakable grief I found was a dying man, and this had Like to have thrown me into a Relapse with greef, the 29th Sept. Lieut Turner died who you may remember was a very modest good man, the 30th my Dear

Stewart died and the 3 October Lieut Pater-son, the men now began to go off fast we for several days Carried out in a Cart four and five a day, at one time, men and their wives have been Carried to the graves in the same Cart, and the poor Little Infant Orphans following, and no person to help or do the Least thing for them, we was now arrived at the greatest scenes of Calamity in the midst of which Col. Wilkins (who was then Lyingill himself) sent for me to ask me to do the Adjutant's duty. I was unwilling to engage in it but thought this was no time to Refuse any thing, and I was immediately put in order to do the duty, you may easily Conceive what a situation I was in, with all the Officers and men of the five compys so ill that we Could only mount a Corp'l. and six men and had to Guard a fort in the heart of an Enemys Country, The disorder still Ragged and I have the greatest Reason in the World to believe it was Contagious for hardly any one Came into the fort but found themselves siezed soon after. We have now sent to the Grave three Officers, twenty five men Twelve Women and fifteen Children, since the 29th Sep^r and many more in a Very dangerous way, tho' I am in hopes the could Weather will soon help us.

Since I Recovered I thought it highly Necessary to make my Will in which I have Left every thing to your Disposall tho' Little as I have it Comes with a hearty welcome I hope you will Receive this time enough to write in the Spring, if I dont hear from you then shall be very Uneasy.

* * * * *

VI.

(ILLINOIS) FORT CHARTRES, 12th February 1769.

DEAR SIR

I had the pleasure to write you the 30th October last by an Express that went from hence by land, with despatches for the Commander in Chief which was to acquaint him of our distressed situation at that time, I then wrote you we had Lost three Officers & twenty five men, since that we have Buried fifteen men more, Almost all the Women and thirty Seven Children that arrived

here with the five companys in perfect health.

The Colonel has been kind enough to Recommend me for one of the vacant Ensigney should the promotion go in the Regim^t. But there is so Little probability of it that I dont flatter myself the Least with hopes of succeeding, tho' one would think it hard too as there are so many Vaeaneies that some might not take Besides the Gent: that died here we have an Account of one Ens; Tracy being killed in a Duell at Fort Pitt, and Ensign Howard is on the decline of life here.

When I wrote you 15th Sept^r (which I sent by Capt. Forbes of the 34th Regim^t) I gave you some Account of this Country It is certainly the finest Land in the known World, it Wants for nothing but inhabitants and cultivation to make it exceed any part of America I have ever been in, You would be surprised to see how Luxuriously every kind of Vegetables grows here,—they grow Wheat, Oats, pease, and Indian Corn, in great abundance, and there are such quantities of the finest Meadow that the grass is in Common to all, Their Cattle run in grass so high that you may be within five yards of a large Ox, and not see him, When the french (whom you know are a very Idle set of people in all parts of America they are in) Cut their grass its Common for them to take three or four teams to the Meddow in a morning, mow all day, and bring it home at night, which is all the Making the Hay gets here. The reason they give for bringing it home so soon is, that Were they to Leave it out two days it would be so much dryd with the excessive heat that it would be good for nothing. The Indians that live hereabouts are a very mean, Indolent Drunken set of people, whom the French have entirely at their command.

Col. Wilkins is taking great pains to settle the Affairs of the Collonie in some kind of Regulation, which as yet has been (since the English possessed it) without any kind of Laws but that of Military Decision. He has now* granted commissions of the peace to

* His Proclamation, based on Gage's order, is dated Nov. 21, 1768. The Courts began Dec. 6, 1768.

several people, both french and English; of those he has formed a Court of Judicature, who are allowed to determin on all causes of Debt, without a Jury. How this may answer with the Laws of great Britain I will not Pretend to say. He has appointed Mr. George Morgan President of this Court, which has given great offence to all the french inhabitants in the Colonie, he being Universally hated by all those people, and indeed has but few friends of any other Nation here (The Commandant excepted). Indeed it would surprise you much to see how we are perplexed with party affairs in this Infant Collonie. The French to a man oppose the Morganians with all their might and I believe would not Scruple to spend their Estates to have their Ends accomplished. Indeed, if half what they allege be truth, they have great Cause of Complaint—for my own share I think there are faults on Both sides. The french are here (as in all other parts I have seen them in) a Cunning, litigious, jealous, set of people, By what I can Learn their grand dispute arises from an Opinion of the Commandant favoring the Company which he is obliged to do in Consequence of his orders from Gen. Gage because they are the only people that make use of English manufactures the others being all French Wines &c., and of Course is Contraband trade. It would be too tedious to enter into a detail of the many scandalous practices that is made use of by both parties, to ruin others, Petitions from the french party to the Commandant daily *Replete with Rebellion*. He on the other hand is endeavoring to support the Company all in His power by issuing His Proclamations for bringing them to Justice and settling all their affairs on a solid foundation which he takes great pains to do, tho' I am afraid he will not accomplish it shortly: The 19th December last Col. Wilkins ordered a Court of Inquiry to be held to settle some disputes—betwixt Mr. Morgan and the french people, It was Carried on from day to day till the 20th January with the greatest *Rancour* by both parties, and when it was over not the least thing settled to either parties satisfaction. What is most extraordinary the french was not able to prove any one thing

They Alleged against Mr. Morgan, It is said here the proceedings will be published in one of the Philadelphia papers But I hope they will think better of it, and not expose themselves so far.

The Spaniards make but an indifferent appearance here, You know, by the Definitive Treaty of Peace, they were to have all the Lands to the Westward of the Mississippi River, in Consequence of which they sent one hundred men from the Havana Under the command of one Capt. Don Rose,* an old experienced officer, to take possession of their part of the Louisiana Country He took post at a place called paincour, about forty miles above this Fort where he has Commanded so much to the people's satisfaction, as will redound much to his honor, tho' he has been so Unlucky with his people by deaths and desertions, that he has now only seventeen men left out of the hundred, It is now said there is another Officer coming up from the Havana to Relieve him and five hundred Spanish Soldiers, who are to be employ'd building a Fort on the Missouri River, which you may see by a map is about sixty miles from hence, on the Spanish shore, It is in the heart of the Country of a Tribe of Indians of that name, who are very numerous and give law to all the Indians hereabout.

It has been talked ever since we arrived here, of Col Wilkins having orders to establish a post at a place call'd by the French Post St. Vincent, the English call it O Post.† It is on the Wabash River, Its by Land 240 English miles but to go by Water is 600 at lest from this place, and for this purpose he is fitting up a very large Boat, by Way of a Row-galley which is to row with 24 Oars, to Carry 35 men With six Months provisions &c and a Brass six-

* Rions renched St. Louis in 1768, but Sir Ange, the former Commander of Fort Chartres, remained in command till of 1770.

† This is Vincennes, which the English, who thought that every French place must necessarily be a Saint, changed to St. Vincent. The French have a way of using au, aux before names, and this has led to mistakes like that in the text. They would speak of Post Vincennes as *au Poste*, at the Post. Hence we have *aux Arcs*, Ozark; *aux Sables*, Ausable.

pounder Mounted on her fore-castle, Her Gunwales are raised so high that the men are not to be seen Rowing, This Boat is to be Commanded by a Commissioned Officer, and is also to Cruise on the Wabash and Ohio Rivers, to intercept the french and Spanish traders from New Orleans, Carrying on an Illicit trade with our Indians at O Post and on the Rivers, It is likewise to prevent them from killing Buffalo, which the people from New Orleans have done in such quantities lately that were they allow'd to continue it, they would soon destroy all those animals.

I believe when I wrote you by Capt. Forbes I mentioned the farm Capt. Stewart and I had bought in Company, from which we had great expectations, But that poor man being so soon Cutt off, has Rendered all our hopes fruitless, for we was obliged to take in other partners that quiet destroys all our endeavors, and things of all kinds being so extravagantly dear that I fear I shall not be able to save any thing out of my pay, had not these poor Gents: died since we came here, I had some hopes of getting leave of absence to go to England, But since it has so happened, I fear I may now give up all hopes of it for life, Indeed I should not so much mind that were I in a part of America that one could have the least hopes of health, I cannot so much complain of it myself for I have been very hearty ever since the Stroke I had in September, that I mentioned to you in my last, But it would shock a Turk to see what the Poor men, women, & children, have suffered for want of proper nourishment. You may easily Conceive what Wretched state a poor man must be in when in the high of a fever to have nothing to drink but Cold Water—

When the fevers had somewhat abated, a great many of the men was seized with a Bluddy flux, which now makes great havoc amongst them, not a Week but we Burry some and when it will end God only knows, for there are numbers of them just at Deaths door, you would pity them much to see them so shortly changed from a set of fine stout hearty Young men, now a weak, feeble, emaciated poor Souls. I Believe by the time you have Read this far you will wish

for a Conclusion, and indeed so it really is time. But my heart wishes much to converse with you and as I cannot have that happiness, hope you will excuse this long epistle, Ensign Howard has been very ill all winter It has been offered to him that if he would give in his Resignation he might return to Europe and I believe I might have the offer of it on the same Conditions I had Mr. Raymond's, I consulted the Colonel in it and he advises me to wait and see what may be the Issue of the Last Recommendation. We have had several expresses from Fort Pitt this Winter and I was in great hopes of hearing from you by some of them but not a line has made its appearance, however there is a good time coming in the spring, I long much to know what luck I have had in the Philadelphia Lottery, and hope to hear you have put out that trifle to Interest.

We have had a fine Winter here as any I have ever seen since I came to America and all the Gents: (except Howard) have been pretty healthy, I still keep bustling about am now busy fencing in a Garden for the men, which with my own and the adjutants duty that I have done ever since poor Turner Died keeps me constantly employ'd and I am sure adds much to my health. Pray make my most sincere Respects to Miss Shipphard to all my Little Countrymen, Miss: Bamsley, Shipphard and Smith, and the Rest of your good family, and may he who has the giving of all good gifts ever Bless you Sir & all your Undertakings, is the fervent prayer of

Dear Sir, your poor but sincere friend,

GEO: BUTRICKE.

VII.

FORT CHARTRES 27th June 1769

DEAR SIR

Though I am not so happy as to have heard from you once since I left Philadelphia, I have not mist any opportunity of Writing to you, and this by Mr. Morgan being a very good one I cannot let it slip without letting you know that one of your friends is still among the living.—My last was of the 10th Febr'y. which I hope you

have Received by this time—In April I was Attack with a severe fever which kept me confined for ten days, and in May again much more severe than the Other tho' it did not last so long, since which I have been very hearty and indeed the whole Garrison are much recovered, tho' the Weather is most intolerably hott: the men keep up their spirits very well, I am in hopes the seasoning (as they call it here) is now almost over.

We have been all this Spring, under the greatest apprehension of an Indian Warr,* we had it from all quarters that several nations had entered into a League to strike the English in the Illinois Country this Spring, Col. Wilkins on this information very prudently filled all the stores with provisions and sent an Officer with the arm'd Boat to get in a quantity of Wood which was happily effected in a very short time and now we have 280 cords piled up under the Walls of the Fort and we can now bid defiance to all the Indians in America,—the 16th April a party of the Kickapoes broke into a house in this Village; surprised a soldier and his Wife in Bed, scalp'd both and got off without the least hurt; and the 14th May another party of the Sax and Reynolds† attacked some of the Indians that live near this fort killed six, and Carried off their scalps, these strokes alarmed us much, obliged us to keep constantly in the Fort, & watch Night and day, Its now said the stroke intended against us will be in the harvest time, But I am of an Opinion it will blow over for this time or we should have had more of it before now.

I have had great hopes of getting leave from Col. Wilkins to return to Europe, which he had in some measure promised me when the new adjutant arrived, but we have heard nothing as yet how those vacancies have been filled; & Cap^t Campbell, the Barrack master here, has got leave to return to Europe,

* These apprehensions were caused by the threats of vengeance made by the Ottawas and their allies, the Kickapoes, Sacs and Foxes, against the Illinois, for the murder of Pontiac, at Cahokia by an Illinois.

† Foxes (Outagamies.)

& has appointed me to act in his absence, with a Salary of two shillings sterling p^d day. This with two I expect for doing the adjutant's duty, will I hope enable me to make you a Remittance of a hundred York in a short time. If I have not some letters from you soon, I shall think you have quite forgot me. Pray give my kind respects to Miss *Jemima*, and all the rest of your good family and believe me

Dear sir

Yours Most affectionately

GEO. BUTTRICK.

To Captain *Burnsley*

Superscribed

To

Captain *BARNSELY* Esq^r

At Bensalem in Bucks Co

Pennsylvania

Pr: favor of

GEO. MORGAN, Esq^r: }

VIII.

FORT CHARTRES 29th Decem^r 1769.

DEAR SIR.

I cannot let slip this opportunity tho' am at a loss what to write, 'Tis almost two years since I had the pleasure to see you, and in all that time not one Line, tho' when I consider former times, I am not so much surprised for I Remember when I was at Niagara a letter in two years was look'd upon as a great favour.

This is the fifth I have wrote you since I came to this place and I took particular care to send them by good hands, so that I hope they are all come to hand. We are now in a melancholy situation we have not had the Least Accounts from any Quarter since the first of June, 'Tis thought the Indians have Cut off the Expresses from Fort Pitt on the River Ohio, and we have Acc^d by frenchmen from New Orleans that since the Spaniards have returned to that place they have forbid all English or french from landing there, If this be true all our Communications are shutt up, the Indians are all out hunting now, But its said we shall certain-

ly have an Indian Warr in the Spring, In my last I inform'd you of my intention to return to Europe, But I have fear I shall not be able to Accomplish it, not only for the Reason above given. But my having so many employments on my hands, which will Render it very difficult.

I now do the duty of Q. Mas^r., adjutant, Barrack Master and since the death of poor Captain Lient Lane have been Obliged to act as paymaster tho' was given to Understand it was intended for another person, there are two candidates for this place, viz: Lieut Chapman and one Rumsey who you may remember in the 42^d Regm^t, he is Recommended for an Ensigny in this Reg^t; and if he succeeds the present Commanding Officer will give him the paymasters place, —I could not help observing to L., Colonel Wilkins that I thought it something strange being desired to do a duty for a Regim^t, and the emoluments given to another Person, but he gave me to understand that he was a Better Judge for me, than I was for myself, it then struck me of the Repeated Advice you have given me, and I immediately told him there was no kind of duty he would desire me to do; but I should be happy in executing it, by this you will see I still am on a good footing with him, But you will pity me when I tell you that the whole Corp and he are on very Bad terms, this makes me have a very difficult Card to play, however I hope to Rubb it out for a few years in order to save a little more money and I hope to be able to send you a Bill in the Spring for one hundred Penn: Curr, I have not time to say more at present, therefore Conclude with my sincere respects to all your family wishing you and them a Merry Christmas and many a happy New Year.

GEO. BUTTRICK.

IX.

Letter dated at Fort Chartres, on the 30th May 1770—is sent “by some Indians just going off for Fort Pitt by land”—speaks of some money matters, and the necessities of Life there are “very dear”—He still continues to hold the numerous offices in the Reg^t, before described, and says “I keep in

with the person [Col. Wilkins?] as you desired, tho' I assure you it is attended with many disagreeable Circumstances, however I shall still adhere to your advice. I am sorry to tell you there are many disagreeable things passes in this part of the world. I have Steered clear as yet, some think it will be a means of bringing us back to Philadelphia for Court Matials &c &c."

His next letter dated June 13, 1770, mentions the preceding letter, and says "I have no news, health and I are again friends and we go hand in hand in spite of Climate,

or a most shocking unhealthy Country," &c.

The next letter dated May 2, 1771, still complains that he has not yet rec^d a line from Cap^t, B—sends this by way of Fort Pitt, and a draft will be sent by Lieut. Chapman of same Reg^t. "who will embark for Philadelphia, by way of New Orleans in a few days," and adds.

"I am sorry to hear there is so great a probability of a Spanish war, We have frequent alarms here of enemy Indians, we have lost one man kill'd and scalped this Spring."



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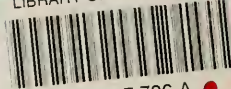


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